

National Canners Association

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Information
Letter



For N. C. A.
Members

Membership Letter No. 78.

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Government Crop Estimates - Canned Foods.
Tax Appeal Procedure.
Enquiries Regarding Tax Liability.
Discoloration of Canned Okra.
Discoloration of String Beans.
Tomato and Corn Production Estimates.
Samples and Advertising in Foreign Trade.
Canned Foods Week Meeting.

Government Crop Estimates - Canned Foods.

At the last meeting of the Board of Directors, there was considerable discussion in reference to the government reports that have been issued from time to time, giving a forecast of canners' crops and prospective yield.

The Secretary was directed to get in touch with the proper government officers, and discuss the desire for absolute accuracy of these reports, or suggest discontinuance. A representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics which has this work in charge, was recently interviewed regarding the forecasts for peas, corn and tomatoes. He stated that the forecasts which have just been issued by the government are based on canners' own reports. He further stated that he had received reports from 688 tomato canners, 188 pea canners and 77 corn canners. The balance of the output of the industry was estimated.

Attention was called to the possibility of these forecasts being inaccurate on account of the present abnormal growing season. This was frankly admitted, and the government will immediately send out to the canners of these three products a letter asking for information concerning the present condition of canners' crops. In answering this letter, canners should bear in mind their answers will be tabulated, and revised forecasts issued immediately.

It has been arranged that a representative of the Bureau having this work in charge be present at the next meeting of the Board of Directors, where there can be a full discussion of the desirability of the continuance of these government reports, and an explanation made as to the manner in which they are handled.

Tax Appeal Procedure.

The Chairman of the Board of Tax Appeals has announced that the Board has received a considerable number of appeals which do not comply with its rules, and that, while the board does not desire to be technical, it is necessary that the rules



of practice be followed. He further stated:

"The requirements of the statute are such that it is the duty of the board to make a report in writing of its findings of fact and a decision in each case. Its findings under the act shall be *prima facie* evidence of the facts therein stated in any proceeding in court. In order that this duty may be performed it is necessary that the issues be clearly defined and that the facts upon which the taxpayer relies be clearly and concisely set forth. A number of the so-called appeals which have been filed with the board are nothing more than mere notices of an appeal without statement of a single fact or proposition of law relied upon. Others merely set forth a conclusion to the effect that the tax liability as determined by the Bureau is erroneous. It is impossible for the board to pass upon the questions involved in such cases unless the rules are complied with.

"The Board of Tax Appeals is an independent agency, separate and independent from the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Treasury Department. The files in the Bureau are not available to the board in connection with the consideration of any case, only insofar as they may be placed in the record by the parties. The statute clearly contemplates a trial before the board and each case must be decided upon the record made before it by the parties."

Enquiries Regarding Tax Liability.

The Internal Revenue Bureau announces that requests for rulings and advice upon abstract cases and prospective questions of income tax and profits liability have become so numerous that it is advisable to outline the Bureau's policy with respect to answering such questions. It will be the policy of the Bureau, the announcement states, not to answer any enquiry except under the following circumstances:

1. The transaction must be completed and not merely proposed or planned.
2. The complete facts relating to the transaction, together with abstracts from contracts, or other documents, necessary to present the complete facts, must be given.
3. The names of all the real parties interested (not "dummies" used in the transaction) must be stated regardless of who presents the question, whether attorney, accountant, tax service, or other representative.
4. A request for a ruling must be signed by the taxpayer, or in case he is represented by an attorney or agent, the request must be accompanied by properly executed power of attorney. Banks, however, will not be required to furnish powers of attorney with respect to enquiries affecting their depositors.
5. A copy of a ruling addressed to a taxpayer will not be furnished to his attorney or agent unless the Bureau is specifically authorized to do so by the taxpayer.



Discoloration of Canned Okra.

A recent investigation by the Research Laboratory of the dark discoloration that sometimes occurs in canned okra showed that the discoloration was due to some substance present in the seed of the okra which forms a dark colored compound with iron. As there appears to be no method of removing or destroying this compound, contact with iron vessels or apparatus should be avoided as much as possible. If necessary to use iron or steel equipment, including knives, for cutting the okra, it should be bright and clean, as rusting makes iron more readily soluble.

Discoloration of okra after sealing of the cans may occur, through solution of iron from the can. This does not appear to occur to a sufficient extent to cause discoloration unless air leaks into the can through loose seams, thereby increasing the solution of iron. It is recommended that in packing this product, the cans be sealed with composition gaskets.

Discoloration of String Beans.

Suggestions recently made by the Research Laboratory, which enabled a canner of string beans to eliminate discoloration of the beans and an objectionable odor, and to reduce rusting at the top of cans, may prove helpful to others who have encountered these difficulties.

The beans - Kentucky Wonder - were being packed in No. 2½ cans, and processed at 240 degrees for 35 minutes. Examination of samples by the Laboratory showed a very slack fill. The Laboratory suggested a larger fill and processing at 240 degrees for 25 minutes.

It was also pointed out that when cans are tightly sealed any rusting that occurs at the top of the can is due to the oxygen of the air within the can. If the cans are well filled, the amount of oxygen in them will be reduced to a minimum and the amount of rust correspondingly reduced. In any case it is doubtful if an objectionable amount of rust will be found in cans if the double seaming is well done. If the cans are not sealed entirely tight some air may work through the gasket and cause rust.

Adoption of these suggestions brought satisfactory results, the canner later writing that his beans now have a good color and flavor, no discoloration, and little rust.

Tomato and Corn Production Estimates.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture has issued statistics on the acreage of tomatoes and sweet corn for canning, with an estimate of the yield based on the condition of the crops as reported for August 1st. The acreage in tomatoes was reported as 312,000, condition of the crop as 69 per cent, the indicated yield as 4.2 tons per acre and the total yield as 1,301,000 tons. In 1923, the acreage was 290,580 and the production 1,233,000 tons.

The acreage of sweet corn was reported as 299,300, its condition as 71 per cent, the indicated yield as 2.1 tons per acre and the total yield as 641,600 tons. The acreage in 1923 was 250,850 and the production 590,400 tons.



Membership Letter No. 78, August 23, 1924---page 4.

Samples and Advertising in Foreign Trade.

The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce has issued a bulletin on the methods and cost of sending samples and advertising matter to foreign countries, including foreign customs duties, marking, documentation, etc. The bulletin covers all countries except the Near East and Far East. Copies are obtainable from the Bureau in Washington or from its district and cooperative offices.

Canned Foods Week Meeting.

Members of the National Committees representing the national associations cooperating in the Canned Foods Week campaign are to meet at the Sherman Hotel, Chicago, on the 28th to complete the details of the campaign.

This meeting is expected to put the campaign into full swing.

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